

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 07100 312150Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 INSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2453
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
USMISSION GENEVA
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 7100

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, BL
SUBJECT: RESTTTLEMENT OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN BOLIVIA

REF: (A) USMISSION GENEVA 13079, (B) STATE 210728, (C) LA PAZ 6555

1. THE NEW BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET TAKEN A POSITION ON THE HMONG RESETTLEMENT PROJECT. GUIDO STRAUSS, WHO WAS SUB-SEC-RETARY OF IMMIGRATION UNDER PRESIDENT BANZER, HAS BEEN REPLACED BY LUDWIG ALVIS, WHO KNOWS VIRTUALLY NOTHING ABOUT IT. STRAUSS HAS BEEN NAMED CHIEF OF CUSTOMS, HOWEVER, AND THEREFORE RETAINS CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT.

2. IN A CONVERSATION WITH POLITICAL OFFICER AUGUST 31, STRAUSS SAID THAT HE WAS IN THE PROCESS OF PREPARING A FULL REPORT FOR ALVIS ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PROJECT TO DATE. HE ALSO REMARKED THAT HE HAD BEEN RETAINED AS FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY INTERNATIONAL'S AGENT IN BOLIVIA, AND IN THIS CAPACITY WOULD CONTINUE TO GUIDE THE PROJECT THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY. HE SAID THAT SOME
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EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING TRACTORS AND TRUCKS, HAD RECENTLY ARRIVED IN BOLIVIA AND THAT WORK ON THE RESETTLEMENT SITE (WHICH IS IN THE TROPICAL BENI DEPARTMENT) CONTIGUOUS TO LAND OWNED BY STRAUSS) WAS PROGRESSING SATISFACTORILY.
HOWEVER, ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST TEN HMONG POINEERS, WHO ARE TO HELP PREPARE THS SITE, HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL LATE SEPTEMBER, AND THE FIRST FIFTY HMONG FAMILIES ARE NOT EXPECTED BEFORE THE

END OF NOVEMBER.

3. COMMENT: THUS FAR, SUB-SECRETARY ALVIS HAS BEEN TOTALLY NON-PLUSSED BY ALL EMBASSY INQUIRIES INTO THE STATUS OF THE HMONG PROJECT. AS THERE IS APPARENTLY NO RECORD OF THE PROJECT OR THE ENABLING AGREEMENT IN ALVIS' FILES, WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF FURNISHING HIM WITH A COMPLETE SET OF OUR UNCLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS OF THE SUBJECT. WITH STRAUSS' MEMORANDUM AND THESE EMBASSY-SUPPLIED DOCUMENTS, ALVIS SHOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO REACT OFFICIALLY TO OUR QUERIES SOME TIME NEXT WEEK. WE WILL KEEP ABREAST OF THE SITUATION, AND REPORT AS DEVELOPMENTS BECOME KNOWN.

4. MEANWHILE, WE ARE IN NO POSITION TO HAZARD AN OPINION ON THE PROJECT'S PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS. WE STRONGLY URGE, THEREFORE, THAT ANY US INITIATIVE FOR FUNDING TO THE UNHCR OR ANY OTHER INTERNATIONAL ENTITY BE DELAYED UNTIL THE SITUATION CLARIFIES.
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